

England 3, Eire 1

A BRAWNY, ginger-haired Irishman slipped a few bumps under England's otherwise easy ride to victory in Saturday's amateur international at Loakes Park.

His name — Duffy, his disposition — dangerous. And for about 30 second-half minutes he had Eire on the verge of equalising their hosts' early two-goal lead.

All big Bill needed was the support his colleagues just weren't equipped to offer him. With it he might have made things mighty embarrassing for the English in general, and their team manager, Charles Hughes, in particular.

For, despite their three goals, England's forwards went nowhere near answering their critics — the ones who so inconveniently point to a recent goal famine which must be completely broken before thoughts of Great Britain's squad reaching the Olympic finals in 1972 can be entertained.

It was the self-same failure that led to the k.o. of Hughes's squad in a double header with West Germany back in 1968.

Seemingly nothing changes.

The Republic, with more spirit than effect, have not stood still however. Last time they crossed the channel was to meet that ill-fated Great Britain team in a pre-qualifying tournament

Gray. Apart from scoring a good goal, he was useless.

Pritchard. Very good. Gave a tricky display. Referee: 10.

Showed the difference between football League and Isthmian League.

A great performance.

By
Mike Whitesman

warm-up game. Only two players — Duffy and Sheridan — made both that and Saturday's trip.

In '68 they were crucified by six unanswerable goals by an opposition which, if lacking the ability to rise above sterner tests, could still put small fry like Eire in their place.

On Saturday, England (no doubt including the major nucleus of the side which will suddenly be re-termed Great Britain when Olympic time comes again) failed even in

On first evidence, the massacre was about to be repeated goal for goal. England sent their visitors reeling for two quick corners inside 120 seconds of the start.

Then Adams, one of a six-strong Enfield contingent, five of which were there at the kick-off while the other came on later as substitute, offered the opening shot.

Yet when England went ahead after seven minutes it was something of a surprise — not that they scored, but the circumstances under which they did.

At the time, referee Walker's decision to award a penalty seemed out of context with the play. But on reflection it is more than likely that a goalmouth cross off the left by Hitchin's Ian Reid forced an Eire defender to handball as both he and his goalkeeper John Swannell a well beaten man.

England countered by an Enfield tit-for-tat — L. Fry coming on field in place of Les Tilley 11 minutes later. But inside 60 seconds, Duffy gave Swannell anxious moments again with a threatening cross-shot from the left.

Another 11 minutes and Eire made substitution number two by pulling off Conway in favour of Dennehy. But the switch was tragically ill-timed. For within two minutes, inside forward Power was being carried off with a leg injury, later estimated as only a bad bruise.

And, down to ten men, the visitors were powerless (no pun intended!) to prevent a long-overdue third goal that clinched the game.

Sutton United's Larry Pritchard had one shot deflected by McSwiney for O'Grady to retrieve by the far post four minutes from time.

On the whole was quite a game. Certainly

His teammate Ken Gray latched straight onto the ball near the line and rounded the keeper to slip it into goal.

The home forwards' major failing appeared in their inability to work close enough to the Eire line often enough. This failure held up what could so easily have become a rout.

And the Republic dished out their first real warning when Jordan of C.Y.M., the only actual amateur club to supply a member of the Irish tour party, rocked an upright to trigger off a series of corners in the 35th minute.

To increase their fire power, Eire's manager Michael Megan replaced Fitzgerald during the interval. He brought back Lynch, a Waterford full-back playing until then as a number 11, to cover the gap in defence, while substitute Phipps took over on the left wing.

The move worked well, although again it was England who took an early initiative, calling upon McSwiney to head the ball off his line in the early seconds of the new period.

Duffy, a tigerish striker from Athlone Town, justined the Irish positional jig with a glorious goal after 55 minutes. Standing inside the English area, he swirled on the spot and lashed home his shot which left goalkeeper John Swannell a well beaten man.

But he couldn't miss scoring two minutes later as he finished off Powell's pass with O'Grady on his knees in the six-yard box.

Wycombe's contribution? Give or take the use of their ground for the first time since 1961, and the inclusion of Peter Suddaby as England's number four, it was very little.

Wanderers' skipper John Delaney didn't even appear as a substitute despite howls for his introduction from local supporters. And, while his ex-colleagues at Skelmersdale were securing a semi-final place against Enfield in their amateur cup replay with Slough, Suddaby had an extremely quiet time in the white shirt of England.

Meanwhile at Berwick, Scotland's amateurs were going down at home by 3-0 to a Welsh side minus Wycombe's Geoff Anthony.

England: J. Swannell (Hendon); L. Tilley (Enfield) (sub.: P. Fry, Enfield), E. Powell (Sutton Utd.); P. Reid (Hitchin T.), J. Payne (Enfield); R. Day (Enfield), R. Haider (Hendon), J. Adams (Enfield), K. Gray (Enfield), L. Pritchard (Sutton Utd.).

Eire: J. O'Grady; T. Fitzgerald (sub.: Phipps), A. McSwiney; W. Jackson, J. Sheridan, F. Dunning; M. Jordan, J. Conway (sub.: R. Prole), D. Duffy, R. Power, S. Lynch.

Referee: Mr. K. E. Walker (Maidstone).

Approximate attendance: 2,500.